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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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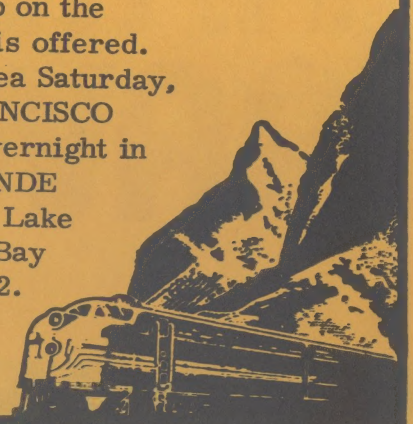
Rio Grande Route

April 9 - 12, 1983

A nostalgic farewell trip on the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR is offered. Leave San Francisco area Saturday, April 9. Ride SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR to Denver. Overnight in Denver. Ride RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR Denver to Salt Lake City April 11. Back in Bay Area via SFZ on April 12. Write or phone for descriptive flyer.



GREAT WESTERN TOURS

639 Market St, San Francisco 94105 • 398-2996

LETTERS

As a long time subscriber to your magazine, I would like to add my two bits to the constant complaints about passenger trains being put into the siding for freight trains.

I spent many years as a train dispatcher on many railroads where the movement of trains was governed by timetable and train order, both with Morse Circuits and Dispatcher's telephones. Under these rules, an inferior train by timetable must clear the time of first class trains by at least five minutes unless otherwise directed by train order extending the time of the first class train. Therefore, there was very little interference with passenger trains by freight trains.

I was Chief Dispatcher at Sacramento for the Western Pacific Railroad when the Centralized Traffic Control was being installed on the entire railroad, with the exception of the paired track in Nevada, which was an automatic signal installation. The rest of the WP had no signalling of any kind, and we went from no signals to CTC.

Under this system there is no superiority of trains. Under train order and timetable, the dispatcher had no means of communicating with trains except at telegraph train order offices at about every fourth or fifth siding. However, with CTC he had control of every siding, with proper indications on the board. In observing the movement of trains on the board, the conclusion was reached that the quickest way for two trains to meet was to put the train to arrive first into the siding at a meet. The dispatchers had a good idea of how long it would take a train to get from one siding to the next, barring any unforeseen delays. This was arrived at by observation. The dispatcher could hold the passenger train on the main line, even tho he was there first, and head the freight train into the siding. If this occurred, the freight would have to start slowing down a good distance from the siding in order to enter the switch at the specified speed and continue on thru the siding at that speed until his entire train was clear of the entering switch, and the passenger train could then leave. All of this process would consume and delay the freight train from 10 to 15 minutes and the passenger train a good seven or eight minutes, depending on the length of the freight train, many of which are now at least 100 cars in length.

However, if the passenger train reached the siding first, the freight train would not have to slow down and would pass by at speed, releasing the passenger train seven or eight minutes earlier and being short would not take him long to move out of the siding.

People who complain about this have no knowledge of why this is done.

Grant S. Allen
Sausalito, California

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ON THE COVER

The last cars of an Amtrak Superliner test train enter the Moffat Tunnel on the first day of a 2-day roundtrip test run of the Amtrak cars on the Rio Grande Railway's RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR route between Denver and Salt Lake City, on Feb 7. Complete coverage of these test runs appeared in our last issue. Photo by Chip Sherman.

★ A NEWS BLACKOUT AND THE BIG BLIZZARD

During the Blizzard of '83, on the weekend of Feb 11, Amtrak trains performed admirably--but one would hardly have known that, given the almost total lack of news coverage of this important segment of our transportation system. The National Association of Railroad Passengers was so struck by this news blackout that they sent the following letter to leaders of the print and broadcast media on Feb 14:

"During the major snowstorm which paralyzed the Northeast this past weekend, the news media as a whole did a disservice to the affected population by failing to adequately cover an important transportation story: the maintenance of intercity transportation by Amtrak trains at a time when all other transportation services were shut down.

"Granted, under ordinary circumstances, it is not news for a transportation mode to be going about its business transporting. However, at a time when paralysis is the rule throughout a region, the fact that one transportation system is still functioning IS NEWS--practical news of considerable importance to the affected population.

"Judging by the newspapers and radio and television broadcasts which I monitored, I think it is likely that many people were led to believe that no transportation option was functional. If this perception caused travelers to 'camp out' in airports and bus terminals when trains were available to them, then the media let them down.

"In covering future blizzards, whether in the East or West, I hope the news services will do a better job of reporting on Amtrak operations."

The letter was signed by Barry Williams, NARP Assistant Director.

For New York readers who did not receive their New York Times on Feb 12 because

of storm-hampered delivery, we did receive it out here on the "Coast", and we can report to you that the word "Amtrak" did not appear in the issue. Here is what it reported about train travel in the storm, from page one: "In the New York area, thousands of offices closed early, and homebound commuters encountered huge crowds and long delays on mass transit and rail lines. With three to six inches of snow on the ground and more falling, bus and train terminals were jammed and chaotic." That's it. Reader Robert J. Swan summarized one's reactions this way: "It is absolutely frustrating to buy a nationwide newsstand issue of the New York Times and not be able to find out how the trains are coping. We can read that surface sections of the Washington Metro forced closure of that entire system; we can read that New York subways kept running with some open sections also; etc. The New York Times then comes in with the item that service is restored on Amtrak, Greyhound, commuter railroads, etc., with the undocumented assumption that Amtrak service had been out. Only the people appreciate Amtrak."

The Times of the 12th reported that "Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and Trenton were virtually paralyzed." However, we know that Amtrak was still serving those cities.

The Baltimore Sun published a nice editorial on Feb 24, entitled "Amtrak Gains Respect." Quote: "People don't complain about the trains the way they used to. There is not as much to complain about. In fact, Amtrak is enjoying a much improved reputation that may have reached a peak when heavy snow stopped planes, buses and cars--but not trains--throughout the Northeast this month. The trains did not always run on time during the snowstorm, but they did run."

A Pittsburgh paper actually reported that the eastbound BROADWAY LIMITED and PENNSYLVANIAN were running full, tho late. But reader William Mangiacarne of Altoona PA criticized Amtrak for not adding cars to those two trains eastbound. Train 40 that left Chicago on Feb 11 had only two Amfleet II coaches, one sleeper and one slumbercoach. Over 80 people boarded it at Pittsburgh, and many were turned away for lack of space. The PENNSYLVANIAN left Pittsburgh Feb 12 with over 50 standees, having only an Amcoach and an Amcafe. Displaced air travelers were reported dismayed at Amtrak's fares, which run $66 Pittsburgh-NY. By bus it is $28 and by air only $19.

Trains tended to run behind schedule, but did get thru. For the Florida trains, the following time losses were recorded at Sanford FL: on Feb 12 the SILVER STAR arrived 3hrs late, while the SILVER METEOR was 7hrs late. On the 13th the STAR was 3hrs late, with a consist expanded from 12 to 19 cars, and running backwards (not turned in New York), and with a second mail car. The same date, the METEOR arrived 6½hrs late, then proceeded to demolish a police car at an unprotected crossing in Maitland FL, losing another hour (no damage to the train). The consist of that METEOR was (at Charleston SC) engines 274 & 355; cars "Pacific Beach", 25037, 25055, 25013, 25004, 3127, 8520, 28010, 25015, 25044, 25029, 25043, 25017, 25076, "Loch Tarbet", "Prince George", "Silver Chasm", 1626, 1269.

RAIL CANADA

TRANSPORT MINISTER PEPIN told his audience on a recent television interview that the Canadian public is to blame for the 20% cut in VIA rail passenger service made in Nov 1981. He said that Canadians did not ride the trains in sufficient numbers, and this was why they were cut. "It is not the Canadian government, it is not the railways who defaulted. Most people don't travel by train. It is Canadians who abandoned traveling by rail." Pepin's comments were published in the Montreal Gazette on Feb 14.

THE OCEAN LIMITED, the VIA train between Montreal and Halifax, will likely see some service cutbacks. Under discussion by VIA is the removal of sleeping cars or the dining car on the portion of the run between Moncton and Halifax, as an economy move. Evidently at issue are car switching charges as well as personnel costs for manning the cars. The decision must be made soon, VIA said, as the next timetable change is May 29, at which time any changes would take effect. See Quotes of the Week, page 22, for more information on this issue.

GREATER SNOW GOOSE: VIA in 1982 (states a press release) did not meet completely the demand of all travelers wishing to observe one of the greatest wonders of nature--the gathering of myriads of Greater Snow Geese near Montmagny. In April and May, thousands of geese arrive to spend their time feeding on rootlike stems in the Montmagny archipelago. These stems, rich in nutrients, give them the energy to continue their 3,000-km journey to the Arctic. This year VIA offers 25 departures aboard the SAINT LAURENT from Montreal Central Station--from Apr 23-29, May 1-13, and May 16-20. On arrival, transfer to the motel "Place Le Germoir" for accommodation is made. In the evening, audio-visual presentations by naturalists and ornithologists explain the phenomenon. Accompanied by experts, an observation tour by boat and an excursion by mini-bus on the Ile-aux-Grues in the Montmagny archipelago is made. Price per person double occupancy from Montreal is $119.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION announced on Feb 14 its decision on a CN application to abandon about 36% of its rail lines on Prince Edward Island. The CTC decided it must retain about 53 miles--about 54% of the 97 miles up for abandonment. Being kept are 17.8 miles on the Murray Harbour Subdivision between Maple Hill and Uigg, and 4.6 miles on the Mount Herbert Spur between Lake Verde and Mount Albion. The 26.6 miles between Uigg and Murray Harbour will be abandoned, including 3.8 miles between Mount Albion and Mount Herbert and 4.4 miles on the Vernon Spur between Lake Verde and Vernon. On the Montague Subdivision, the CTC decided to keep 25.6 miles of branch line between Mount Stewart and Montague, abandoning 4.8 miles on the Georgetown Spur between Montague Junction and Georgetown. Also kept are 5 miles on the Souris Subdivision (Elmira Spur) between Harmony Junction and Baltic and abandoned are 4.8 miles between Baltic and Elmira.

DAVIE SHIPBUILDING LIMITED of Quebec will build a $121 million ferry for CN Marine to be used on the Nova Scotia-Newfoundland route. The contract was finalized in January after the federal government agreed to subsidize $26 million of the construction price that exceeded CN's budget. The 15,000-ton ferry will carry 1200 passengers and will run between Cape Breton Island and Port-aux-Basques.

THE WHITE PASS & Yukon Railway will remain closed thru next summer, according to a recent announcement. The railway said that the loss of revenues from the Cyprus Anvil lead zinc mine, the closure of which led to the railwy's temporary shutdown, could not be offset by summer passenger revenue. The Yukon Government plans for a bus on the Skagway-Whitehorse for tourists in lieu of the trains.

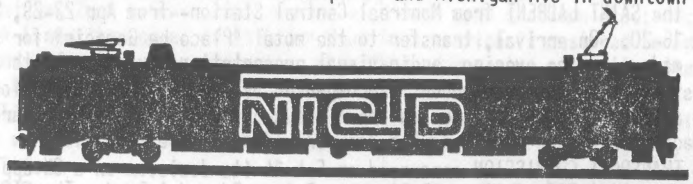
A CANADIAN CONSIST: VIA train 1, the CANADIAN, at Calgary, Dec 31, 1982: engines 5591, 6504, 6603, 6502; cars 610 bag-dorm, coaches 125 & 103, Skyline dome coffee shop 507, coaches 5735 & 5726, sleepers 2002 "Ingramport", 1159 "Eldorado", 1152 "Euclid", 1116 "Edson", diner 1347, sleepers "Chateau Vercheres" & "Chateau Rouveille", dome-lounge-obs "Strathcona Park."

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

NEW YORK'S EASYRIDE project is more efficient than the MTA inproviding transportation for the handicapped, says Herbert Sturz in a Feb 12 NY Times Op-Ed article. Easyride is a non-profit operation that provides 84,000 rides per year in Lower Manhattan at a cost of about $10 per ride to the provider, compared with $1000 per ride that Sturz says it costs the MTA for providing wheelchair-lift buses. Sturz says the Easyride approach, door-to-door service with wheelchair-fitted vans, should be expanded to cover the whole city. Easyride is funded by federal funds, fares, Medicaid and other sources.

CITY OF OXNARD, California expects to build a $5.8 million multi-modal station with a bell tower and an interesting design resembling an old-fashioned train depot.

SOUTH SHORE LINE now has all 36 of its new cars in Michigan City. At least two more months will be required to fully test all the cars and put them into operation. When that happens, the last of the 56-year-old Pullman cars will be retired. Ridership on the line is up about 10% over last year, attributed to the new equipment and also to mile winter weather which permitted a smooth transition between the old and new equipment. The line offers a $6.50 roundtrip weekend excursion fare from Chicago and any of three stops--Tremont, Kemil Road or Beverly Shores--for the Indiana Dunes, for what is called some of the best cross-country skiing in the Midwest. Kids are half-price. The tickets can be purchased only at the station at the corner of Randolph St and Michigan Ave in downtown Chicago.



OXNARD COMMUTER TRAINS--an update: On Feb 17 the SP was fined $16,000 by the California Public Utilities Commission for unilaterally halting operation of the trains on Feb 7 & 8. On Feb 22 a federal court in San Francisco ruled that the state has jurisdiction in the case. On Feb 24 the state Transportation Commission voted to halt funding of the train. A PUC hearing was held on Feb 28, but was continued until Mar 7. It is assumed that on Mar 7 the PUC was rule that the trains be discontinued. During the Feb 28 hearing, Warren Weber of Caltrans criticized the SP for its operation of the train, calling it more a "carnival road show" than a commuter rail service. Feb 28 may turn out to have been the last day of full operation of the trains. That night heavy rains disrupted the line at Moorpark, halting all train service. (See elsewhere this issue for more details of storm disruption of the SP lines in California.)

NEW JERSEY COMMUTERS were without trains beginning on Mar 1 when UTU workers struck commuter rail lines in that state. It was called the first statewide railroad strike in New Jersey history. Seventy-thousand commuters were affected. Amtrak added cars to some trains, but did not add more trains or make stops at commuter stations not usually served. The UTU also threatened to shut down the Hudson, Harlem and New Haven commuter lines in New York beginning Mar 7.

ROCK ISLAND LINE commuters in Chicago will get lounge cars on seven morning and evening rush hour trains starting Mar 7, on runs between the Loop and Joliet and suburban Blue Island. The cars, modified bi-level commuter cars, will have bars near the center vestibules, dispensing alcoholic beverages in the evening, plus snacks, and coffee and rolls in the morning. The cars will be equipped with electronic games. The cars are operated under contract to Kane Enterprises, Inc., of Hanover Park IL.

LOS ANGELES SUBWAY project got an important go-ahead signal when the Deukmejian administration on Feb 16 decided that $37 million be allocated for work on it. On Feb 24 the state Transportation Commission went along with the governor's recommendation and approved the funding for the 18-mile starter line. Most of the $37 million will go for buying a yard for the subway from the Santa Fe, a 43-acre site located in downtown Los Angeles. The rest of the money is for completion of design and engineering of six of the 12 planned subway stations.

(continued on page 19)

RESHUFFLING IN THE ROCKIES

Changes will be wrought by the re-routing of the "City of Everywhere"

With the Amtrak switch to the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR route now virtually a sure thing, the question has arisen about other changes that might take place in trains that serve the Mountain states. Probably no one would object to the re-routing of the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR over the Rio Grande route--except for residents of Wyoming. If the SFZ were taken off the Wyoming route and no replacement given, that state would lose all its rail passenger service.What could be done?

Interrail, the Intermountain Association of Railroad Passengers, has been ready for the fight ever since word got around that Amtrak was looking at the Rio Grande. Interrail believes that Wyoming service should be maintained, and here are some of the reasons: There is greater on-line population in Wyoming than on the Rio Grande route (Interrail's Charles Tubman has tallied up a total of 186,078 population for the present Wyoming stops, against 118,175 for the Rio Grande route (not including Denver and Salt Lake City). The second reason is faster running time (two hours faster Denver-Salt Lake on the Wyoming route). The third is that ridership in Wyoming increased last year--from 59,277 in FY 81 to 60,008 in FY 82--on the mode of transportation that is the only all-weather mode serving Wyoming. With the recent completion of a "balloon" turn-around track near the Cheyenne depot, notes Mr. Tubman, it is possible for Amtrak to serve that city's downtown station once more without expensive switching charges. Under the present situation, Tubman points out, Amtrak has two sets of equipment tied up in Salt Lake City and Ogden for 14 and 18 hours respectively; running one of them over either the Rio Grande or the UP Wyoming route would have the equipment producing revenue instead of sitting dead in a terminal.

Interrail suggests one of the following strategies: lobby to have the DESERT WIND run as a Los Angeles-Las Vegas-Salt Lake-Ogden-Cheyenne-Denver train, or the PIONEER run as a Seattle-Portland-Boise-Ogden-Salt Lake-Grand Junction-Denver train. What is more likely to happen, however, is an extension of the PIONEER across Wyoming on the present SFZ route to Denver. Quite possibly this would be a tri-weekly run (the entire PIONEER route being reduced from daily to tri-weekly). As we are about to go to press, sources indicate that this choice is favored by Amtrak.

If Amtrak runs the re-routed SFZ on the Western Pacific between Salt Lake City and Elko NV--on the former CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR routing that misses Ogden--as our reports indicate (see last issue), Salt Lake City would logically become the connecting point for the three Intermountain trains (the SFZ, DESERT WIND and PIONEER). How would the scheduling change under these circumstances?

RTN contributor Glenn Lee has worked out a proposed scheduling for these trains that starts with the SFZ leaving Chicago 3½ hours earlier than at present--at 3:25pm, to arrive Denver at 8:15am. Eastbound, it would run 4hrs later Denver to Chicago (leaving Oakland one hour later, and keeping the Rio Grande 14-hr schedule Salt Lake-Denver). An advantage of this schedule is that it restores "day train" service to the Chicago-Omaha segment, where there is a market which has been killed by the present 3am-4am times in Omaha. Also, Lincoln with have trains at a better time. A lesser advantage is that there is genuine overnight service between Omaha and Denver both ways, altho there historically has not been much of a demand for this kind of service; however, better train times at Omaha and Lincoln may encourage growth of patronage to and from Aspen and other Colorado resort areas.

The westbound SFZ would run 1hr, 10mins later Denver-Salt Lake than existing RGZ schedules; and eastbound it would run 35mins later than the RGZ. This would allow for convenient train times westbound (after lunch) and eastbound (before

dinner) at Glenwood Springs for those transferring to and from connecting buses to Aspen (assuming Amtrak will run such buses).

The PIONEER schedule is the tail that wags the dog, notes Mr. Lee. The PIONEER cannot leave Seattle earlier than at present (8am) nor can it leave Portland northbound any later in the afternoon (5:40pm) if local Seattle-Portland business is not to be affected adversely. Thus the proposed eastbound schedule remains the same to Pocatello, where the present 30-min station stop becomes a 15-min stop (the westbound train stays only 10mins there) and then operates 15mins earlier to Ogden, stays in Ogden only 5mins, and leaves Ogden 30mins earlier than at present, arriving in Salt Lake 35mins earlier than at present--in at 7:40am, the last of the three trains from the west to arrive. Westbound #25 would leaave Salt Lake 30mins after the SFZ arrives in Salt Lake from Denver, and is the first of the three trains to depart from Salt Lake for the west, arriving Ogden at 12:05am, leaving Ogden 12:10am on the existing schedule and then on the existing schedule all the way to Seattle.

The westbound DESERT WIND would be the second of the trains to leave Salt Lake, out at 11:15pm, and then operating 1hr, 50mins earlier the entire distance to Los Angeles, arriving there at 2:15pm. Eastbound it would run 2hrs, 10mins later L.A. to Salt Lake, leaving L.A. at 2:50pm, arriving Salt Lake at 7:30am, the second of the three trains to arrive from the west. This gives better times at L.A. and Las Vegas, eliminates the "wee hour" arrival at Salt Lake, and best of all, provides no need for college students traveling L.A.-Provo to change cars.

The SFZ westbound would leave Salt Lake at 11:20pm, the last of the three to depart, after a 40-min station stop. By operating on the WP, it avoids problems created by continuously rising water in the Great Salt Lake, which slows operations on the SP fill. It also can serve Wendover NV, which has been without passenger service since the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR was discontinued. It arrives Elko 30 mins ahead of the existing schedule, and thus can run 30mins earlier on the entire route to Oakland. Eastbound, the SFZ operates one hour later Oakland to Salt Lake, leaving Oakland at 2:05pm and into Salt Lake at 7:20am, the first of the three trains from the west to arrive, for a 45-min station stop before departure at 8:05 am for Denver via the Rio Grande.

These suggested schedule changes add 3hrs to westbound SFZ Chicago-Oakland and 3hrs eastbound Oakland-Chicago. They add 1hr, 40mins to Chicago-L.A. time of #35 the DESERT WIND and 1hr, 50mins to its eastbound schedule. They add 3hrs, 30mins to Chicago-Seattle time for westbound #25, the PIONEER, and 4hrs eastbound to #26.

The DESERT WIND would have improved connections with the SAN DIEGANS. Westbound into L.A. at 2:15pm, it would connect with the 2:50 departure for San Diego. The 11:20am from San Diego (Sat & Suns only), into L.A. at 2:05pm, would connect with the 2:50pm DESERT WIND departure for the east. (This SAN DIEGAN should run daily to take advantage of this scheduling.)

Amtrak will have to run connecting buses, says Mr. Lee, for the SFZ in Colorado: Glenwood Springs-Aspen, and seasonally from Dotsero (18 miles east of Glenwood) to Vail and Beaver Creek ski resorts; and also south from Grand Junction to Delta, Montrose, Ouray, Telluride, Silverton, Durango and Mesa Verde National Park. Patronage potential also exists for connecting bus service from Thompson, Utah

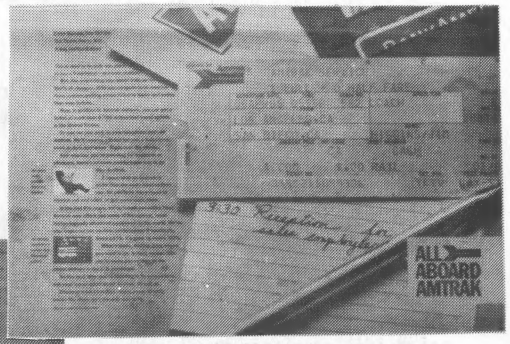
south to Moab and Canyonlands National Park, and Lake Powell recreational area. The existing D&RGW stop at Helper UT should be moved 12 miles east to Price, the large county seat and retail shopping community which has a much larger population.

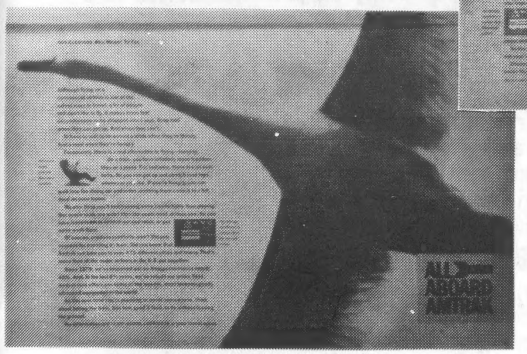
The increased patronage potential for the re-routed SFZ is phenomenal, since it will place the ski resorts and dude ranches only an overnight train ride away from all major West Coast cities as well as Chicago and Omaha-Lincoln. However, the SFZ will be hard-pressed to provide space for the many Denver-Glenwood Springs travelers, and a solution to this would be to retain the RGZ equipment and operate it in advance of the SFZ both directions on this critical 185 miles of line (perhaps also serving Winter Park and the new Beaver Creek and Vail ski resorts if a stop were instituted at Dotsero for a connecting bus).

★ AMTRAK TAKES ON THE AIRLINES

Amtrak's new "All Aboard Amtrak" marketing campaign got underway in mid-January (see RTN 259, page 17 for Amtrak's description of the campaign) and it was aimed directly at the air traveler, urging him to take a train next time instead of a plane. About two weeks later, the campaign was joined by an "All Aboard America" cutrate fare (see RTN 260). While rail supporters seem unanimously agreed that a cutrate fare was badly needed, some question the wisdom of initiating, for the first time, a direct competition with the airlines.

Three issues are involved here. One is whether it is politically expedient to create a direct competition with the airlines. Second, the airlines may not be a source of new patronage for Amtrak. Third, Amtrak may not have the capability of competing with them as it thinks it has.





Shown here are three examples of Amtrak's new compete-with-the-airlines advertising (another was shown in RTN 260, p.19). Above is a rather cluttered ad that is headed "Even before you get on the train, you'll see a big improvement." At top left is a "wild goose" ad with a photo reminiscent of "Jonathan Livingston Seagull", which reads "Not everyone was meant to fly." At bottom left is an ad which pictures baggage tags from all over ("We go to more places than all the major airlines combined").

You can obtain two posters (the Wild Goose and Maybe Your Next Flight Should Be on a Train) free for $1.50 check or money order for mailing, from: Amtrak Poster Offer, 850 W. Fullerton Ave, Addison IL 60101.

As to the first, political, issue, Senator Bob Packwood of Oregon stated at the Senate conformation hearings for DOT Secretary Elizabeth Dole that trains should gradually displace planes for Northeast Corridor travel. That idea may have political support, and if so Amtrak may not be creating a problem in taking on the airlines. However, such political support may not hold outside the NE Corridor, and Amtrak may only antagonize the airlines with the result that their campaign could backfire on them and the airlines could become a potent political enemy of Amtrak funding.

Second, Amtrak might not gain many new patrons by trying to displace travelers from the airlines because in terms of speed the airlines are unique in most areas and the speed of trains cannot compete except in places like the NE Corridor. Again, the NEC experience may be wrongly generalized to the rest of the country.

The third point is described well by NARP Director-at-Large Dan Monaghan: "Amtrak VP-Marketing Robert Gall listed the requirements of travelers in regard to their expectations when it comes to choosing a mode of transportation: (1) an extensive national network; (2) modern equipment; (3) on-time performance; (4) amenities; (5) efficient ticketing and reservation systems; (6) a stable, reliable organization. Mr. Gall stated that Amtrak offers all of these features.

"If Mr. Gall will take a look at the current Amtrak map, it should be obvious that the nation's rail passenger service flunks the first requirement. In no way is there any comparison between Amtrak and air and bus modes when it comes to providing an extensive nationwide network. It is absolute hypocrisy to make such a claim when it is virtually impossible to go from Dallas to Denver, Minneapolis to Kansas City, New Orleans to Miami or St. Louis to Washington, at least without ridiculously circuitous routings and rip-off fares based upon these circuitous routings. It is one thing to say that Amtrak serves over 500 cities; it is another to consider how they are served. The major airlines may not serve as many cities but they certainly make it far more possible and practical to go between the ones they do serve--and then there are the feeder airlines that fill the gaps left by the majors.

"Amtrak doesn't even have the means of connecting the principal cities in a marketable manner, let along a feeder system. Amtrak can never be the competitor Mr. Gall envisions nor can it ever make efficient use of its physical plant as long as these links are missing in the chain."

The cutrate fare will certainly attract more business, and if the new ad campaign just convinces people that Amtrak is modern like the airlines (the airlines always must be modern, as antique planes just aren't safe, unlike old trains), then more people will ride and perhaps no harm will be done. With the cutrate fare advertising and the airline-style advertising all mixed up, we may never know precisely which it was that brought Amtrak more business.

Regarding the All Aboard America fares, a reader calls our attention to some confusion in ads for the fares. The actuality is (according to a Feb 14 revised fare notice) that a passenger on a roundtrip can make three stopovers (one in his destination city, one along the route going,and one along the route returning; the "destination city" may be stated arbitrarily if you are simply on a circle tour). Nights on trains don't count as stopovers, and direct train-to-train transfers don't count as stopovers either. The fare is basically a quasi-pass, allowing for three stopovers enroute. Some ads may lead readers to believe that only one stopover is accepted. As the fare notice explains: "This is a 'regional' rather than a 'city-pair' fare plan which allows travel via any route within the region or regions purchased. A passenger may select any intermediate point as the 'destination' of the ' round trip'. Therefore, if requested, the passenger may stopover at up to any three places between the origin and ultimate destination of their All-Aboard America itinerary."

THE BLIZZARD OF '83
by Bob Underwood

The Blizzard of '83 struck the New Haven area on Friday, Feb 11 beginning about 5pm. In no time at all it was really snowin' and blowin'. Weather reports said we'd have five or six inches, but when the snow finally stopped early Saturday morning, we'd had about 18 inches of the white stuff.

Not having to be to work until 1:30pm, I arose early on Saturday, and after shoveling the walk, had breakfast. On the radio I heard that the local bus service was out for the most part. My scanner was on, and at 7:30 I heard that train 61, the MONTREALER, was in the station. He should have left for Washington at 5:44. At 8:20 an operator mentioned that train 66, the NIGHT OWL, was just going thru Norwalk. Train 466 to Springfield departed after 66's arrival, so passengers were able to make their connection. Departure was 9:13, while he should have left at 6:50. Train 66 left a little while later, due out at 4:37. New York City, Philadelphia and Washington were each hit worse than the other by the storm.

At about 9:30 I left the house and began walking downtown. I live on a main street, and it was well-plowed, but side streets were either untouched or just a plow's width. I had my scanner on as I walked, and heard Metroliner train 293 told that there were no tracks open in the station and that he'd have to wait at the Chapel Street signal. He was on time from Boston.

It took me 40 minutes or so to make it downtown, and the area was nearly deserted. I saw a total of three city buses. Then I heard the scream of F40s. There in the cut east of the Chapel Street bridge sat train 293. The wind had blown the snow off the sidewalk at the edge of the bridge, so it was easy to take a few photos of the train.

I then walked to the railroad station. What a sight! Track 9 hadn't seen any trains and was completely snow-covered. Track 7 on the opposite side of the platform had three trains. Train 145 from Springfield, due in at 8:30, was pulled up all the way to the jack so that only the last of the cars were by the platform but beyond the overhead canopy, where the snow was up to my knees. I waded thru the snow in order to photograph train 169, which was right behind train 145. No. 469 crept up to the rear of 169 and hoped to couple on so passengers could walk thru without wading thru all the snow.

I then went over to tracks 8 and 10. There on track 8 sat 4-car train 292, the Metroliner to Boston. The platform was being plowed at the time. Track 10 was completely snow-covered and all tracks in front of the m-u shops were likewise. The sun was now out and it was cold but beautiful.

At about 11:20 I heard the dispatcher advise train 95, the COLONIAL, that he'd have to wait out at Shore Line Junction. About 10 minutes later I learned that all overhead power was out. If that wasn't bad enough, switch and signal power was out also. At 11:38 I heard that they planned to transfer all passengers from train 169 to 145. I hoped that they didn't have to walk thru all that snow that was on the platform!

I walked to work and thruout the afternoon managed to listen to my scanner a little. At 12:52 train 292 was still on track 8, power was still out, and the maintainer was trying to hand crank a switch so he could leave. At 1:45pm there was still no power. At 3:30pm train 95 was finally leaving, due to depart at 11:40am. Trains 190 and 168 were both in the station, due out at 10:10am and 12:05pm respectively. At 5:21pm train 168 was stopped at Chapel Street with M/A down. Later, after I got home, I heard train 174 was in the station, due in at 5:40pm, but had orders out of New York to make additional stops of train 176. New Haven knew nothing about this. Train 476 to Springfield took connecting passengers from 174 and both trains departed. I went to bed. We had had more snowfall in a 12-hour period than ever before since records have been kept.

Reviving the auto-train

Auto-Train Corporation's on-board service crew posed on the front of engine 4000, the flagship of Autc-Train's locomotive fleet. Auto-Train photo.

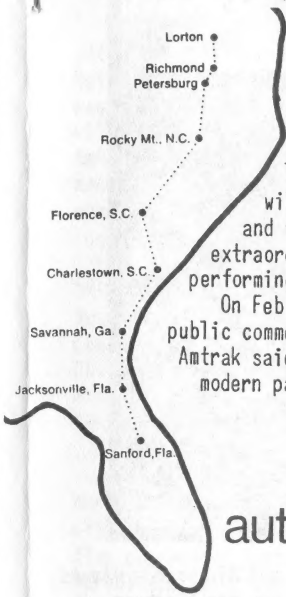
A news item in RTN issue no. 257 in December to the effect that Amtrak was considering reviving an Auto-Train-type operation between the Northeast and Florida probably elicited reactions of disbelief from some. However, The Amtrak Board of Directors at its Jan 19 meeting gave the go-ahead for preparing to run the service.

The startup costs of the auto-ferry service will be $4.4 million, Amtrak estimated. The rail corporation reportedly plans to use the same terminals that the defunct Auto-Train Corporation did--in Lorton VA, not far from Washington DC, and in Sanford FL. (The map on page 13 shows the route of the Auto-Train, which should be identical to that of the Amtrak successor.) Obtaining rights to use the two depots are one of the first steps in beginning the operation. RTN reader Jack Fritz, Jr. surveyed the former Auto-Train facility at Sanford on Feb 4 and found no activity in progress there. There was ex-Auto-Train equipment--domes, auto carriers, a switch engine--scattered all around the property, but no person in attendance.

The Amtrak auto-ferry operation will not, of course, be a carbon copy of the

AMTRAK'S AUTO FERRY WILL START UP LATE IN 1983

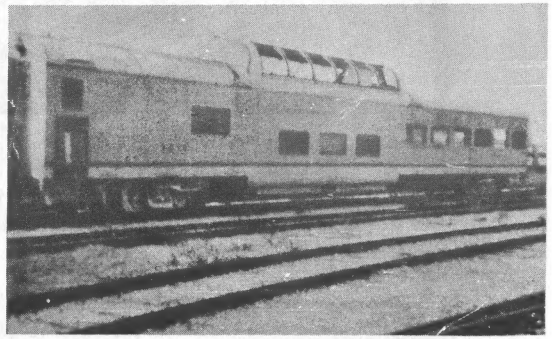
Auto-Train service. Amtrak has its own ideas about how such a service should be operated, and it has its own constraints under which it must live. One report said that auto-ferry trains would consist of 5 coaches, two dome coaches, one lounge, 3 buffet cars, five sleepers, 20 triple-deck auto carriers and three double-deck carriers. Amtrak's design group is now at work on the service, presumably creating unified graphic designs, etc. for the entire operation, and probably designing special modified car interiors. Amtrak President Graham Claytor likes to input a lot of ideas into railroad operation, and one can expect that the service will bear his strong imprint.

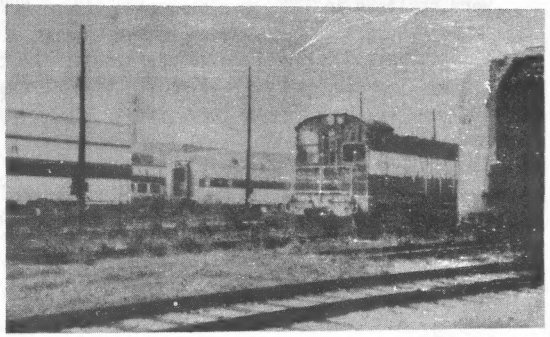


auto-train

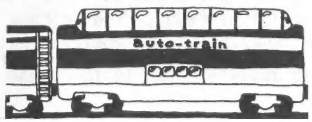
Amtrak calculates that the auto-ferry will earn $4 million per year, so that most of the startup costs will be returned in the first year of operation. It is expected that 140,000 passengers will ride the train per year. While Auto-Train Corporation went bankrupt, it is generally agreed that the demise of that company was due to mismanagement coupled with some bad luck. There seems to be no reason to believe that the Amtrak auto-ferry will not be successful. The original Auto-Train was well-patronized and was well-liked by passengers. The Auto-Train crews also had an extraordinary amount of identification with the company and pleasure in performing their duties. They were indeed sad to see the operation fold.

On Feb 14 Amtrak announced the beginning of a 60-day period in which public comment on the proposed auto-ferry is invited. In the announcement, Amtrak said that the service "would begin in late 1983 and would combine modern passenger coaches, sleeping cars, food service cars, and auto





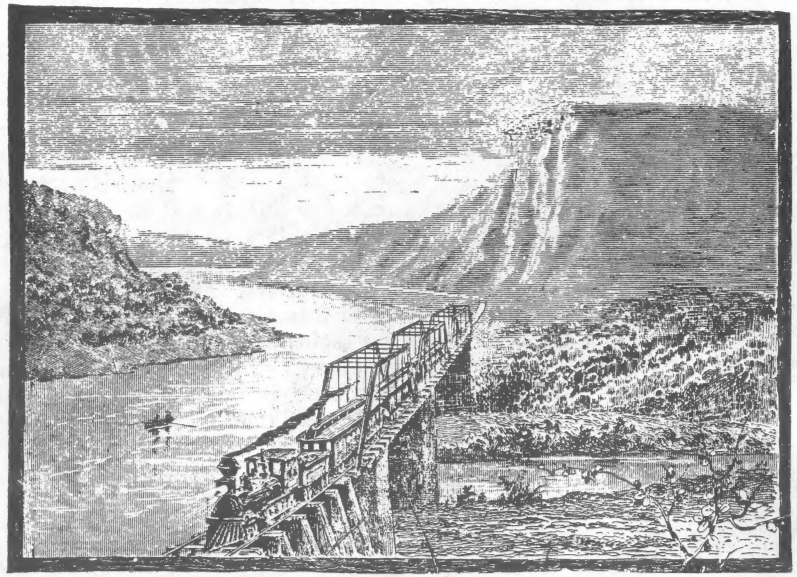
Auto-Train's Sanford, Florida facility today. These photos were taken on Feb 4 by Jack Fritz, Jr. Top photo is of UP dome lounge 9010, which Auto-Train never rebuilt--it was to be maxi-dome 909. With windows broken, it awaits scrapping. Bottom photo is general view of the facility, showing auto carrier, switcher and several domes.



carriers in one train. It would operate on an overnight schedule three times a week during off-peak periods and daily during the peak seasons. Each train would accommodate approximately 530 passengers along with 200 automobiles. A startup date, schedules, fares, on-board services and terminal locations will be announced if Amtrak decides to operate the proposed service."

You can send your comments on the auto-ferry to Mr. W. S. Norman, Group Vice President - Marketing and Business Development, PO Box 37631, Washington DC 20013, or call toll-free 800-368-5848. Persons in Washington may dial 393-6455. At the end of the 60-day period, Amtrak will present its Board with a summary of comments.

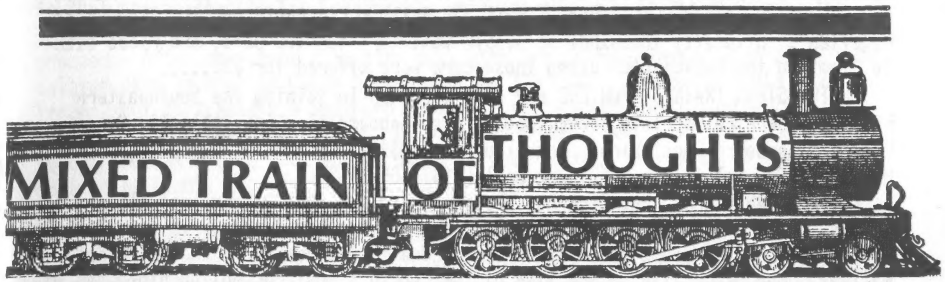
★ THE SUNSET ROUTE IS 100 YEARS OLD ★



On Jan 12, 1883, at a point near the junction of the Pecos and Rio Grande Rivers, (Amtrak noted in a Feb 20 press release) officials of what is now the Southern Pacific drove a silver spike marking the junction of eastern and western rails linking the Gulf of Mexico with the Pacific Ocean. Communities along the Sunset Route, the route of Amtrak trains 1 and 2, are now celebrating the line's 100th anniversary.

Rail passenger service began a month after the spike driving, and the first passenger trains were simply called the PACIFIC EXPRESS and ATLANTIC EXPRESS. They were replaced in 1894 by a more resplendent SUNSET LIMITED, now one of the oldest train names in the nationwide Amtrak system. The train bears the same numbers that it did under Southern Pacific operation. The train travels 2,032 miles, crossing five states and serving such major cities between New Orleans and Los Angeles as Houston, San Antonio, El Paso, Tucson and Phoenix. It heads into two usually spectacular sunsets westbound (over the bayous of Louisiana and in the New Mexico mountains).

Amtrak noted that the route's highest elevation is 5,074 feet at Paisano, Texas --and it drops to 231 feet below sea level alongside the Salton Sea in California. An 1890 publication of the Southern Pacific set the Paisano elevation at 5,082 feet, some eight feet higher (Paisano is about 200 miles east of El Paso). The engraving above is taken from that early SP publication, which predates the SUNSET LIMITED itself, and shows a train on the Sunset Route crossing Devil's River in the Grand Canyon of the Rio Grande River, a short distance west of Del Rio, Texas. The same book gives the elevation at Salton Sea as 263 feet below sea level.



RIO GRANDE TAKEOVER announcement will be made by Amtrak on March 24, the day after the rail corporation's next Board of Directors' meeting. The Rio Grande Railway is required to obtain permission from the ICC to join Amtrak and drop responsibility for its RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, but we are told that the ICC action will be only a formality and will not delay the changeover. Our guess is that Amtrak and the railway will immediately put up 30-day service change announcements along the affected routes. We have not seen Amtrak's proposed schedule changes for the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, but they are probably pretty close to the suggested changes given in the article on pages 7 & 8, at least on the Denver-Chicago segment. We do know that under them connections to and from the EMPIRE BUILDER and the SFZ will be broken. It is verified that the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, will move to a 5:45pm departure from Chicago, starting Apr 24 (arriving Los Angeles at 9am). This will allow a connection from the eastbound EMPIRE BUILDER to that train. While some people may not think that many people connect from the BUILDER to the SFZ, the connection (in both directions) is important to those, for example, who live in Minnesota and wish to travel to Denver.....

★ ★ ★

NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORPORATION, the railroad recently created out of the merged Norfolk & Western and Southern Railways, is apparently interested in joining up with the Santa Fe. On Feb 28 the corporation said it had purchased a little over five percent of Santa Fe's stock, at a cost of around $100 million. A merged Norfolk-Santa Fe would form a coast-to-coast railroad, with the two joining in Chicago and Kansas City.....

DENVER UNION STATION is to be converted into a shop and restaurant center adjoining a hotel-convention center. The building will be restored. The city council has just okayed negotiations to start the project, which will cost $237 million.....

THE EMPIRE BUILDER'S every-Thursday sellout of sleeping car space for next summer was reported in issue 259. Here's a followup on that problem: When Brennan Tours asked for the space, there were two sleepers assigned to the train. Later they were cut to one, but Brennan's space was still reserved, thus filling all the train's sleeper space one day a week all summer. An Amtrak Manager admitted that selling all the space to a tour group is against Amtrak policy, but the corporation believes it will have to live with the problem in this instance, as it had made the reservations in good faith at a time when the tour operator was asking for no more than 50% of the sleeper space. The space is tied up between Seattle and Belton MT only.....

THE SILVER PALM to Tampa had 272 revenue passengers on Saturday, Feb 19--the highest number counted on a Saturday. (There are only 240 seats, but only some of the passengers traveled the entire route.) Rider Tom Higgins reports that the food in the Amfleet II lounge was good, especially the chunky chicken. The train

was on time the whole journey, and reached Tampa 15mins early. Tickets were collected before passengers boarded. In the Tampa station the Gold Coast RR Museum had on display the ex-CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR car "Silver Crescent" and the "Ferdinand Magellan". Literally thousands of people went thru the two cars, and rides back to Miami on the SILVER PALM using those cars were offered for $85.....

SOUTHEASTERN TRAIN SUPPORTERS may be interested in joining the Southeastern Railroad Technical Society, which covers the Seaboard Air Line, Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Coast Line. Annual dues are $10. Contact J. L. Cates, 1552 Highcrest Cr, Valrico FL 33594, or call (813) 685-8448.....

UPPER SARANAC LAKE, New York has one of the United States' six best elite retreats, according to the monthly newsletter, The Hideaway Report. It's called The Point, but you can't reach it by train, due to the demise of the Adirondack Railway. The other five on the list of the "World's Most Enchanting Hideaways of 1982" are Hawk Club & Resort in Pittsfield VT, Jenny Lake Lodge in Grand Teton National Park WY, Kachemak Bay Wilderness Lodge in Homer AK, and Tall Timber near Durango CO.....

UNITED AIR LINES in its current series of radio commercials featuring prominent businessmen and others who travel a lot, includes the owner of the Ringling Bros., Barnum and Bailey Circus. The commercial seems to imply that the whole circus flies, with no mention of the circus train without which the operation would be hard pressed to get about.....

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THE GEORGIA RAILROAD'S mixed train service is expected to remain running until April. The Georgia Public Service Commission concluded its hearings on SCL's discontinuance request on Jan 27, but parties were given until March 15 to file additional information.....

AMTRAK MENU CHANGES coming up reportedly will see fried eggs added to the breakfast menu. The barbecue chicken will be dropped, replaced by another type of chicken. The prime rib will be replaced by a steak.....

THE FORT PITT, for its last runs on Jan 29 and 30, had the following consist: engine 266, Amcoach 21848, and Amcafe 20035. For the last run of train 38 on the 29th, the Keystone Association of RR Passengers placed two banners on the front of the engine, reading "Thanks, Penn Dot, Amtrak, Conrail" and "The FORT PITT--That's It. 4/26/81 - 1/30/83". Very few passengers boarded #38. TV station WPXI assigned a cameraman to record the last eastbound departure.....

SPEAKING OF BANNERS, note that the SILVER PALM inaugural train on the cover of RTN 258 has the word "inaugural" correctly spelled on its banner, on its arrival in Miami. Somewhere along the route a hasty correction was made. Other photos taken at Tampa, its starting point, show the word misspelled as "inaugeral". Herein lies another of those minor railroad mysteries.....

★ ★ ★

MEXICAN TRAIN WRECK on Feb 19 in Guaymas must be counted as one of the worst passenger train disasters of all time. Mechanical problems halted the Nogales-Guadalajara train of the Ferrocarril del Pacifico 15 miles east of Guaymas for an hour when a freight train crashed into the rear of it, mangling four passenger cars and starting fires. Initial reports said that 20-25 people were killed, but later reports indicated that at least 60 died, and the final toll could go higher. Several Americans were believed among the fatalities. Police criticized the crew for failing to place warning lights behind the stalled train. The crew's radio was also inoperative. Another 69 or more passengers were injured. Sixteen cars derailed with the impact of the crash.....

AMTRAK BOARD MEETING of Feb 16 had on the agenda requests for money for three projects: Boston city ticket office, Harrisburg transportation center, and supplemental funding for right-of-way improvements on the Springfield line. Presumably these commitment approval requests were all approved.....

SINGLE-ENGINE TRAINS can have their problems, reports Adron Hall. Another disadvantage, he notes, to switching the CRESCENT's consist in Atlanta (see RTN 260) is that the section to New Orleans has only one engine. If the HEP dies, the train is without lights, heat, etc. And if the prime mover dies, the train cannot proceed. After operating only nine days with one engine, train 20 of Jan 22 was delayed over an hour at Derby MS when engine 327 died. The delay would have been longer, but fortunately a Southern Railway local freight, with engine 2675, was switching at nearby Poplarville. This engine powered #20 to Atlanta where the layover Amtrak engine took the CRESCENT to Washington. Amtrak's F40 engines are apparently highly dependable, but there will be inevitable breakdowns. If a train has only one engine, as with the long-haul CRESCENT and CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, and it breaks down, certainly great expense is incurred by Amtrak when it borrows a host railroad's engine for several hundred miles, or uses several Greyhound or Trailways buses to transport a whole trainload of people, as from Centralia IL to New Orleans (RTN 260). Of course, the folks who opted for train travel over bus aren't too happy either. It seems Amtrak would find it more palatable for all concerned to run with two engines, at least on the long hauls. Again, in the case of the CRESCENT, it doesn't seem logical or economical (apparently SR is charging Amtrak $2-3,000 per day switching charges, according to SR trainmen) to reduce the train in Atlanta.....

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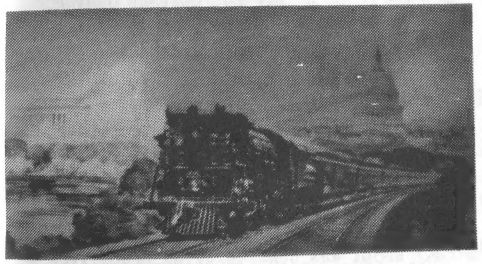

C&O HISTORICAL SOCIETY is reproducing one of the most famous images of a C&O train ever produced. The lithograph (illustrated here) will be in full color and will measure about 12x33 inches--half the original size. The original was created in 1934 and shows a C&O Pacific class F-19 locomotive pulling the GEORGE WASHINGTON out of Washington DC. The reproductions of the original lithograph will be available from C&O Historical Society, Dept 12, 9309 Ridgefield Road, Richmond VA 23229. The price of $10.95 includes postage. Virginia residents should add 4% sales tax.....

TAMPA-ST. PETERSBURG segment of the Florida trains route will soon be replaced by a bus connection, reports Kevin Gregoire. Amtrak doesn't consider this much of a loss of train service since it's a slow move and involves a backup maneuver at St. Petersburg.....

★ ★ ★

ICE CREAM RETURNS to the Amtrak menu with the April menu change, according to reports. Individual serving containers of Haagen Daaz vanilla or chocolate ice cream will be available in all food service cars.....

SEATTLE- AND PORTLAND-bound passengers can buy a special Amtrak tour package which includes rail transportation, hotel for two days, and a rental car with unlimited mileage. Purchasers can choose from three price levels in hotels.....

OGDEN UNION STATION move has been made, Amtrak announced Feb 18. Amtrak has moved into new facilities there after the historic station was renovated. Amtrak's portion of the station includes a separate waiting room 1200 square feet, southwest of the station's Grand Lobby; new and separate access to the Amtrak waiting room from the front of the building; and office and baggage areas. The station also houses an art gallery and museum. The relocation eliminates occasional conflicts between community events in the Grand Lobby and access to trains.....

HUDSON, NEW YORK may get a new high-level station, constructed by Amtrak and NY DOT. Business is very good there, but the station has some drawbacks, such as being hard to locate, especially at night. On the banked curve at the station, trains lean the wrong way to accommodate passengers comfortably.....

A MONTREALER RE-ROUTING is expected in the near future, with the train changing from the B&M to the Central Vermont. The line would join the CV at Palmer MA, running via Amherst rather than Northampton. Amtrak will save a lot of money with the change, because B&M charges are high, and crews might operate thru between Springfield MA and Montreal.....

HISTORIC SOUTH SHORE poster and calendar are now available from the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), and the money from the sale of the two will go toward funding marketing and advertising activities to boost ridership. The full color 18x26" poster won a national award in 1926. It's entitled "Homeward Bound on the South Shore Line", and is one of a series of promotional posters of the 1920s. The poster costs $10. The 75th anniversary calendar includes 12 8x10 photos of old and new equipment, and a complete history of the railroad; it costs $5. Send a check to: NICTD, 8149 Kennedy Ave, Highland IN 46322.....

THE SOVIET UNION needs better, more efficient rail service, it decided, and near year-end it announced bonus pay for railway workers at skilled levels who demonstrate efficiency. Party leader Andropov made a special point of singling out deteriorating rail service in one of his early speeches after taking office.....

★ ★ ★

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR is reportedly sold out on weekends thru the end of April. As reported last issue, the last run is expected to be on Apr 25, between Denver and Salt Lake City. The equipment will then deadhead back to Denver.....

NEW ORLEANS IS the only U.S. city with direct Amtrak service from the three largest U.S. cities--New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. It will be the site of the 1984 World's Fair, and it will be the first time that a city with such major Amtrak service has hosted a World's Fair. In 1974, Spokane was the site of such a fair, and a special train from Seattle operated to serve it (not too successfully, as there were problems with the train's scheduling). These facts were pointed out in a recent New Orleans newspaper article by Edgar Poe, in a rave review of CRESCENT service.....

GREEN RIVER, WYOMING Union Pacific (Amtrak) depot was damaged by an arson fire the night of Jan 23, with $10,000 damage reported. The depot had been a "mess" for a couple of years, according to reports. UP had stripped the interior in an uncompleted remodelling attempt, and passengers bought tickets and checked baggage thru an agent in the freight office. In other Wyoming news, a firm which had tentatively planned to start a bus service this spring from Casper to connect with the SF ZEPHYR in Laramie has put its plans on hold pending the outcome of the planned transfer of the SFZ to the Rio Grande line.....

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FLORIDA TRAIN RIDERSHIP has increased markedly in recent weeks. Amtrak said it was due to the All Aboard America fares, to improved economic news, and to the fact that this is the major season for travel to Florida from the Northeast. On Feb 18 Amtrak began running two dining cars on the SILVER METEOR north of Jacksonville, and was planning to do the same on the SILVER STAR, thru Apr 15. Extra personnel were also assigned. The dining cars are frequently serving until 11pm. Amtrak said that at times as many as 600 people were aboard one of the Florida trains. To help accomplish the extra diner assignment, Amtrak will run the diner on the CRESCENT between New York and Atlanta and the lounge between New York and New Orleans, instead of the opposite.....

THE COAST ROUTE between Oakland and Los Angeles was knocked out by heavy rainstorms that have continued to hit California. With a 91-foot trestle knocked out at Surf, about 50 miles south of San Luis Obispo, and 200 feet of track washed out at Moorpark, south of Oxnard, Amtrak said on Mar 3 that it would be at least a week before the line would be reopened. Affected were the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, the Oxnard commuter trains, and the Oakland-L.A. segment of the STARLIGHT. STARLIGHT passengers for L.A. were being placed on the SAN JOAQUINS, which were not affected by the storms. Southbound passengers are bused from Sacramento to Stockton to transfer to the SAN JOAQUIN. Passengers to San Jose are bused from Oakland to San Francisco and transferred to a Peninsula commute train. Passengers for Salinas, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Oxnard are not accepted. The troubles began around midnight the night of Feb 28, when the Elder Creek Bridge near Gerber washed out, severing the STARLIGHT line between Oakland and Portland. At the same time, with 84-mph winds near Santa Barbara and heavy rains and surf, 2000 feet of track were damaged there, and a bridge at Moorpark washed out. The Gerber bridge was rebuilt and washed out again a few hours later. A bridge at Chico also was out the night of Feb 28, restored the next morning. Both COAST STARLIGHTS were annulled on Mar 1. The STARLIGHTS were back to normal north of Oakland by Mar 3. The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR was also affected for a time, by flooding at Bahia, between Martinez and Suisun-Fairfield. The trains ran only to Sacramento for a day or so, with bus to Oakland.....

★ ★ ★

THE RIO GRANDE Railway was meeting with Amtrak on Mar 3 on the takeover negotiations. A formal announcement is due from Amtrak on Mar 24.....

THE WASHINGTON POST ran an article very favorable to Amtrak on Feb 21, entitled "Amtrak whistled in as blizzard snowed under the competition".....

THE NEW YORKER magazine's Feb 21 issue contains a charming article by Berton Roueche on riding European trains, including the TGV.....

NORTH COAST HIAWATHA activity: the state of North Dakota and the Senate Transportation Committee were having a hearing on the state's legislation for reviving the train, on Mar 3.....

ENDING TAMPA-ST. PETE train service and substituting a bus would save Amtrak $1.6 million per year, Amtrak President Claytor said, and would save passengers 35-70mins of travel time. Running beyond Tampa gets Amtrak into another train crew district, and requires that it maintain another set of equipment for the STAR.....

★ ★ ★

USA RAIL PASS, which Amtrak sells only outside North America, will not be increased in price this year, Amtrak said.....

BOSTON & MAINE has set Mar 30 for a reorganization vote.....

NARP MEMBERS DISTRIBUTE leaflets on California trains that are threatened by the Deukmejian administration, asking passengers to write their state legislators. Key legislators to write are: Hon. Willie Brown, Hon. David Roberti, and Hon. Alfred Alquist. The address for them all is: State Capitol, Sacramento CA 95814. Donations to pay for leaflets are requested, to: NARP, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516.....

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR was ridden from Reno to Oakland by Ted and Sylvia Blishak and guests, along with about 400 other people boarding at Reno a few days ago. The train reached Reno 50mins late, but the station predicted "On Time" and made no contrary announcements. The train ran out of food in a short time, and the situation was tense and embarrassing. A diabetic woman said she had to have some food, and fellow passengers in the diner shared their with her. (The crew had already given up their own lunches to accommodate the crowd.) The crew said that the Chicago commissary repeatedly understocks the train, even tho it knew the number of people who would be boarding. Ted suggests complaining to Eugene N. Eden, VP-On-Board Services, Amtrak, 400 N. Capitol St, Washington DC 20001.....

News in this issue is updated thru March 3, 1983.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT (continued from page 6)

WASHINGTON METRO SYSTEM was delivered the first of 294 subway cars built in Italy, on Feb 16..... THE CTA'S O'HARE line had three station openings on Feb 27--the Harlem, Cumberland and River Road stations. Chicago Mayor Byrne pressed for the openings before election day..... A BMT TRAIN derailed two cars on an elevated portion of line in Queens NY on Feb 4..... THE BART BORD last month approved construction of a train storage yard in Daly City..... WASHINGTON METRO BOARD on Feb 24 postponed a vote on proposed fare increases.....

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MOVING?

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CARS & CONSISTS

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Chicago Feb 17: engines 293, 253 (F40s), 701 (P30); cars 1223, 1164, 39925, 34043, 39974, 38001, 32044, (deadheads:) 39933, Chicago RTA cars 7314, 7301, 7315, 7316, 7286, 7309 (RTA cars returning from Oxnard commuter train service).

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, San Jose Feb 18: engines 283, 246; cars 1151, 39936, 31003, 34006, 33021, 38010, 32026, 32018, 39946. 30 minutes late.

*SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, train 18, Los Angeles Feb 2: engines 240, 361; cars 1126, 2941 "Pacific Waters", 20220, 21872, deadheads SP 293, Finlay Fun-Time Tours cars FTX2 "La Marguerita de Oro II", FTX6 "Audubon Park", FTX3 "Elihu Redfield", FTX5 "Stones River", FTX6 "Glenn Annie".

*SAN DIEGAN, train 578, Los Angeles Feb 2: engine 214; cars 21178, 21195, 20052, 21212, 21199.

*SILVER METEOR, train 88, Jacksonville FL Feb 4: engines 388, 382; cars 1203, 1618, 2476 "Sarasota", 2923 "Pacific Park", 2094, 25047, 25046, 25016, 25007, 28004, 8510, 3126, 25021, 25045, 25037, 2440 "Pacific Beach."

*CARDINAL, train 51, New York Jan 30: engine 903 (AEM-7); cars 1136, 2933 "Pacific Skies", 4645, 3125, 4700, 21884, 21072, 21065, 21250, 20032 Amcafe.

*New England Metroliner, train 294, New Haven Jan 30: engine 931 (AEM-7, off at New Haven), 346 (F-40, on at New Haven); cars 28001 Amdinette-lounge, 21833, 21844, 21818.

*INTERNATIONAL, train 364, Hammond/Whiting Dec 27, 1982: engine Conrail 1640 (GP-15-1); cars VIA 15302 (HEP baggage), 360, 366, 368, 341, 362. Same, Dec 18: engine VIA 6900 (LRC); cars Amtrak 21219, 21169, 20205, 21245.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 49, Utica NY Dec 31, 1982: engines 338, 346; cars 1141, 25098, 25086, 4001, 4003, 3101, 8504, 2900 "Pacific Bay", 2464 "Silver Isle", 2085, 2913 "Pacific Gardens", 25096, 4643, 4004, 4610, 1250.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Apr 16: Brandywine Ltd; Oxford & Kennett Square PA-Coatesville PA RT via Octoraro Rwy & Brandywine Valley RR. Octoraro Alco S3 & open-window coaches. $18. SSAE to Wilmington Chap. NRHS, PO Box 1261, Wilmington DE 19899. Flyer avail March 1.

Apr 30: Railroad Days Special; Royal Oak-Birmingham-Bay City MI RT via Durand. 2 SEMTA GP-10 diesels, ex-PRR & UP coaches; railfan amenities. Visit Durand's RR Days. $20. Bluewater Mich. Chap. NRHS, PO Box 296, Royal Oak MI 48067.

Apr 30: Broad St. Line excursion, Philadelphia; 3-car train of oldest transit cars in regular serv in N. America. Lv Fern Rock station 12 noon. $14, kids $7. BERA-Red Arrow Fund, PO Box 2264, Short Beach CT 06405.

May 7: Mystic Seaport. Visit 19th C New England Port & Cobblestone Village; board last wooden Whaleship, Charles W. Morgan, other ships. Tour exhibit buildings. Dining. Mystic Valley Rwy Society, PO Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126. 617-361-4445.

May 7-11: Gold Spike Railroader. Re-enactment ceremony at Promontory UT; visit Calif. RR Museum, Cache Valley UT; from S. Calif by SPIRIT & SFZ, return DESERT WIND; free connecs elsewhere. Pacific RR Soc, Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516.

May 28,29,30: Roaring Camp & Big Trees RR Second Annual Civil War Encampment & Battles. $3 admission; steam train rides extra. Beverly Pelton, c/o Roaring Camp, PO Box G-1, Felton CA 95018. (408) 335-4484.

May 28: Trip to Newport; lv Boston 10am; lunch at Stonebridge, shop at Restored Brick Market, enjoy Newport Harbor Cruise, visit The Breakers mansion. SSAE to Mystic Valley Rwy Society, PO Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126. (617) 361-4445.

May 30: The Railroader; lv Boston North Station for Steamtown, Vermont. Visit world's largest RR Museum; 22-mi steam ride on Vermont Valley RR. Meal stop on return trip. Mystic Valley Rwy Society, PO Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

VIA RAIL CANADA, AMTRAK, EURAIL PASS, 20thCENTURY RAIL TOURS - Tickets and reservations - WE KNOW HOW! One call does it all. Pay by credit card or check. Tickets mailed directly to you. Contact GREAT WESTERN TOURS, masters of rail travel, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

SWISS RAIL TOUR, April 15-23, 1983. Write: Rail/Road Tours, Hyde Park Travel Bureau, P.O. Box 24, Hyde Park, MA 02136.

SEE OUR RAILROADIANA items, china, glasses, silver, linens, timetables, rules, etc. at "Cornfield Meet" Apr 10, Pasadena CA Hilton and "Lone Star" RRiana Show Will Rogers Memorial Center, Ft. Worth TX May 1. Jim & Elaine McClellan.

RAILROAD CLOTH EMBLEMS. Send $2.00 for three samples and list. Over 400 different designs available. Joseph Lajoie, Box 3, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

TRANSPORT 2000 CANADA'S Annual General Meeting will be held at Melville, Sask., on April 9 and 10. A chartered bus will likely be available from Regina, where VIA still calls. Information from: Transport 2000 Saskatchewan, Box 3594, Regina, Sask., S4P 3L7, Canada.

TRAIN AND BUS TRANSPORT 2000 PIN, available for $2.00 from Transport 2000 Quebec, 2275 Laurier East, Montreal, Quebec, H2H ZN8, Canada.

SIXTH GREAT PACIFIC COAST RAILROADIANA COLLECTOR'S SHOW and SALE, Saturday May 7, 1983. Capitol Plaza Holiday Inn, 300 J St, Sacramento CA (near State RR Museum). Hours 10am to 4pm. Sponsored by the National Association of Timetable Collectors. Seller tables available: members $20, non-members $30. Public admission $1.50. Contact Roy Gabriel, P.O. Box 981, Sacramento CA 95805.

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, late AT&SF passenger, and other slides. List and sample $1. List only LSASE. John Wegner, Dept RTN, Box 914, Kansas City, MO 64141.

"Trains Helped Build America - They Can Rebuild It" bumper stickers: $1.20 ea, 3 for $3; cash, check, stamps OK. KARP, PO Box 283, Carnegie, PA 15106.

"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL", RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & postage. Full details will be given later in RTN. Rail Travel News, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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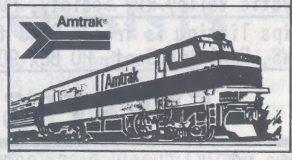

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Not satisfied with depriving Atlantic Canada of The Atlantic, the train which once linked Halifax and Montreal through Maine, Via Rail now is seeking ways to curtail the service offered on The Ocean Limited.

"Rejeanne Blais, a public relations officer for Via Rail, has confirmed that the corporation is looking at different options to streamline services. The effects of any decision will be seen when spring and summer schedules come into the hands of the public.

"One of the options being considered is the removal of dining and sleeping cars from the Halifax-Moncton portion of the run. If that happens, another of the pleasures of rail travel is lost. It used to be a joy to board the train in Halifax and then go to the diner for a late lunch as the train rolled through Rockingham.

"What happens if there are no sleepers in and out of Halifax? Will passengers be required to ride in coaches until they reach Moncton where the sleeping cars will be added? Will there be a club car included in the consist? The lounge cars are not at all comfortable--especially for a non-smoker.

"Will east-bound passengers have to leave their Pullman accommodations at Moncton and find a seat in the coaches? Will seats be reserved for them? Will they, as the old song lamented, have to ride 'in the baggage car ahead?'

"The simple fact of the matter is that Via Rail, hiding behind the excuse of saving money, is attempting to discourage rail passenger travel. This latest proposal will put people out of work, but we have long since arrived at the conclusion that the government and its agencies, of which Via Rail is one, is little concerned over job losses. Certainly, travel on The Ocean Limited will be rendered less attractive than now it is and it is less appealing today than it was a decade ago.

"Just once we should like to see Via Rail make an effort to upgrade its mainline passenger services in this part of the country. The federal transport minister promised, when The Atlantic was taken off, that there would be an LRC train for the Saint John-Halifax service. The promise has evaporated. He promised that the country-wide reduction in railway passenger service which was implemented in November, 1981, would make possible better service on the trains which remained.

"Now, the talk is of further cutbacks in the very area--service--that was to be improved. No diner or sleepers out of Halifax? What a sad condition is overtaking us. Will they at least let us have a counter car with a grub bar? It will not be much but it will help."

--Halifax (Nova Scotia) Mail Star editorial, Feb 9

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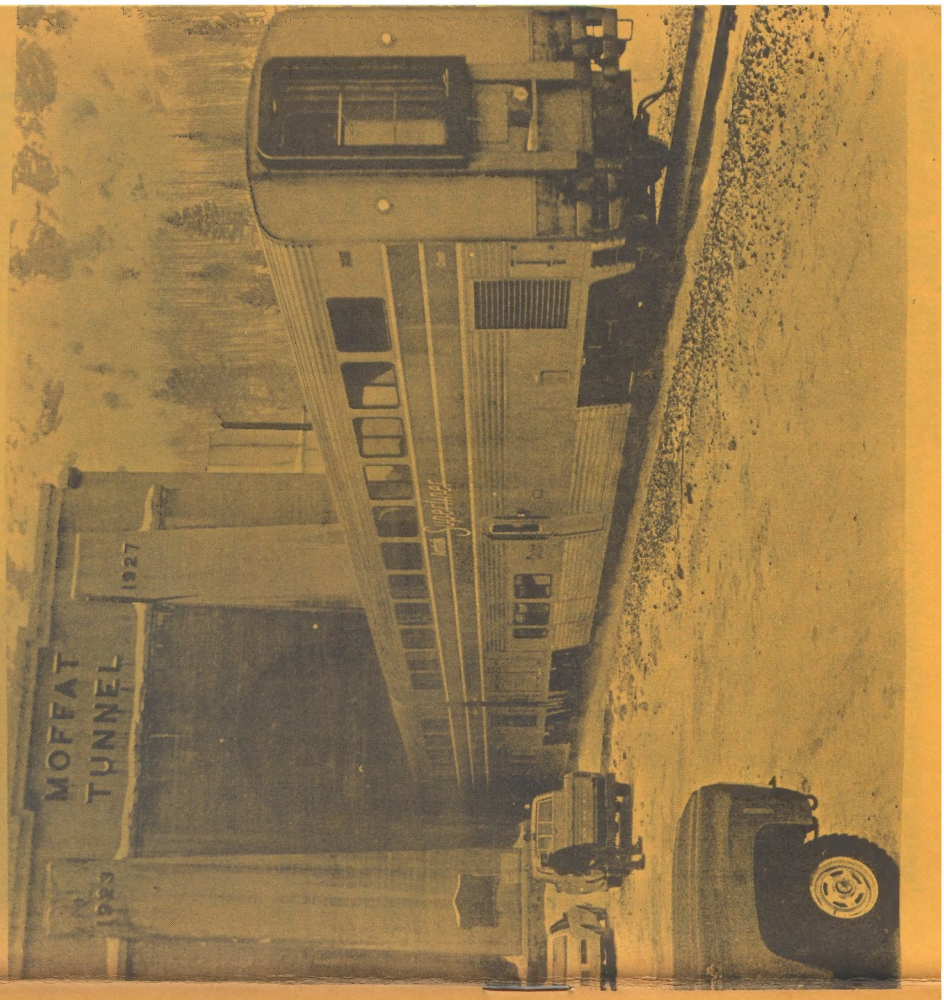

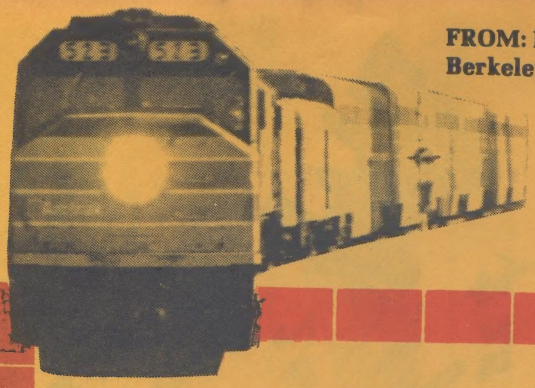

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